

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

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JOSHUA LEDERBERG
JOSEPH D. GRANT PROFESSOR
OF GENETICS

Sir Gustav Nossal
The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute
Post Office, Royal Melbourne Hospital
Victoria 3050 Australia

Dear Gus:

It is really rather painful for me to have to put you off when you have come forth with such an attractive invitation and all of the inducements of personal rapprochement which I would really treasure. However, I am afraid that there is too great a chance that you really underestimate what this transition may be demanding of my family as well as myself. In an optimistic moment I would be inclined to agree with you that we should be well settled by next spring and could then happily and positively respond. However, the risks and consequences of that turning out to be a bit more difficult and that we will find ourselves in a deep conflict as the time for the trip rolls around, are sufficiently great that I think I really had better say no. Needless to say, if there were some fashion in which you could feasibly bring the matter up again, say, in mid-January and give us the chance to appraise the opportunity more circumstantially, I would be very happy indeed to reprocess the contingency. But I realize what a burden this would place on your own arrangements and could hardly offer this as a serious suggestion. I will go so far as to say that I will at least try to defend the relevant time interval until the very last moment.

As an aside I would have to comment that taking account of the Toxic Substances Control Act there are likely to be far fewer molecules in the future than we have seen in the recent past! I am not sure whether that is precisely the comment you wish to have or the converse.

You well know that my visit to Melbourne 21 years ago was one of the high points of my life and I am sure that you would be one of the first to appreciate that it is only a realistic appraisal of other circumstances that can stay me at the present time.

Yours sincerely,

JL/gel